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HMONG WOMEN DISRUPT

*Rebelling against
identity politics
on the East Side*



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by Susan Du

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NOTES

THE SHORTLIST



TONY WEBSTER

Protesters demand street safety improvements after Lyndale Avenue pedestrian death
at citypages.com

THE STAT SHEET

26

Homicides in St. Paul this year after pair of Sunday murders

Summer 2022

Projected opening date for MOA water park, per new city timeline

No. 17

Current ranking of unbeaten Gophers football, who are 8-0 for the first time since 1941

148

Hennepin County deputies who will get body cams by January 2020

“One’s faith must be very weak if it cannot stand up to a simple dialogue with other beliefs.”

Jayson Slinger responding to “Kandiyohi County Commissioner’s name appears on declaration against ‘interfaith dialogue’”

MURDER & MAYHEM

THIS WEEK, PUBLIC WORKS crews replaced 22 street signs around Bde Maka Ska bearing the Calhoun name. The Minneapolis Parks and Recreation Board shared the news in a Monday Facebook post—along with a few photos of the new signs going up—that was shared more than 1,300 times in less than 24 hours. “This completes the process of changing street and park names to reflect Bde Maka Ska,” the Parks Board wrote, “the Dakota name for the lake that has been used by the local American Indian community for many years.”

POPULAR STORIES

AT CITYPAGES.COM

Peace Lutheran staved off death by taking **‘LOVE THY NEIGHBOR’** to a radical extreme

MIRANDA LAMBERT is damn near perfect at the Xcel

WARRANT ISSUED for Republican challenger Danielle Stella’s arrest

Mahtomedi fans taunted Asian kids on **COMO PARK HIGH** girls soccer team

Minneapolis’ **OFF WITH THEIR HEADS** involved in ‘horrific’ van dragging of 24-year-old woman

THE STINKY BRIDGE

Newport wants to sue Sanimax for making the town smell like rotting animals

Last year, South St. Paul residents Patricia Keech and David Newfield decided they'd had enough with Sanimax.

The company is headquartered in Wisconsin, but its rendering facility—where it turns animal byproducts like used cooking oil and discarded skins into pet food, soaps, and even antifreeze—is in South St. Paul. They've got no problem with what it does. But they do have a problem with how it smells.

The two filed suit in March 2018, alleging that “noxious odors” wafting from the facility were preventing them from fully using their property. According to the complaint, some “80 households” had contacted the pair's lawyers with similar bones to pick.

That lawsuit is now in its final stages, with a preliminary settlement pending. But it might not be over just yet. It turns out the residents of South St. Paul aren't the only people fed up. They now have an

unexpected ally in the entire city of Newport, which voted to join the lawsuit last week.

Mayor Dan Lund doesn't mince words. Newport stinks. It has for a long time. But the stench no longer comes from the closed stockyards. And the neighboring refinery and recycling center have taken drastic measures to curb odor emissions. The remaining villain is Sanimax.

“It smells like rotting animals,” he says.

Planning outdoor get-togethers is often predicated on whether there's a decent breeze, or if it's going to be one of those dreaded still days. It's especially bad on the Wakota Bridge leading into town—the “Stinky Bridge,” colloquially.

“Because the bridge stinks, the smell is associated with Newport,” Lund says. That's not exactly an attractive reputation. In a letter to Judge John Tunheim, the city's attorney described the “lost tax base from lack of private development” and “lower property values” it's caused.



BRUCE BISPING, STAR TRIBUNE

“The city has spent over \$1 million to remove the Knox Lumber building to make way for the Transit Station and new development, but we are seeing little interest in the site which sits immediately east of Sanimax.”

Lund doesn't believe the preliminary settlement is harsh enough. Sanimax is supposed to pay around \$750,000 in damages and legal fees. It also gets four lawsuit-free years to install \$450,000 worth of odor control tech.

According to said settlement, the company has already spent over \$2 million on odor control since 2011. Lund is skeptical that another \$450,000 is going to do much—especially since it's not the first time

the company has found itself in court over the smell.

“Sanimax has demonstrated that they'd prefer to go to court than fix the problem,” he says. He wants a tougher settlement that will force the company to take drastic action.

A statement from Sanimax General Manager Donn Johnson “acknowledges” there are “odors that can occasionally be detected,” and that it's “making investments to mitigate them.”

Whether or not the city actually can join the lawsuit is up to the judge. It is a little late in the game for another party to jump in. But Lund and Newport remain hopeful. “Enough is enough,” he says.

—HANNAH JONES

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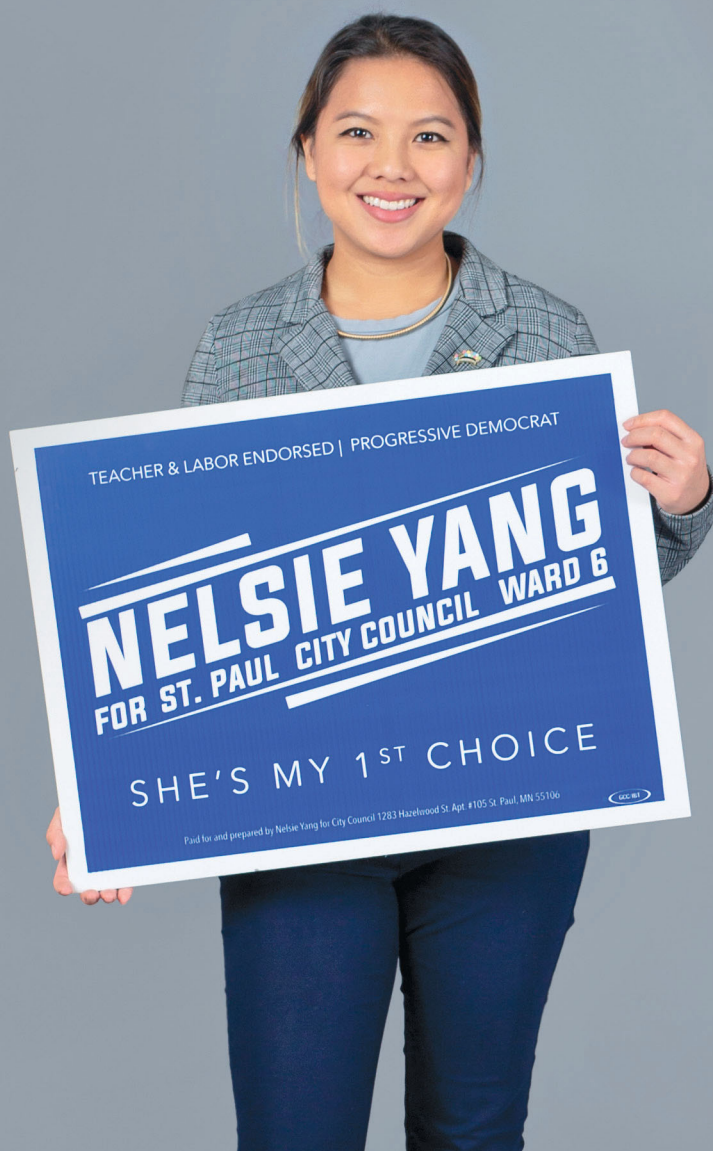
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Hmong Women Disrupt

Rebelling against identity politics on the East Side

BY SUSAN DU

Nearly every Friday, Cindy Yang and LyLy Vang-Yang would commiserate over lunch about the space Hmong women take up in politics.

They have a lot in common. Both are second-generation Hmong women under 30 who became progressive operatives despite expectations they would get well-paying corporate jobs, marry, and retreat to lives of suburban quietude. They're also unlikely friends.

Cindy Yang had been fundraising chair on Dai Thao's 2015 reelection to the St. Paul City Council, then campaign manager behind Susan Pha's historic ascension to the Brooklyn Park City Council in 2016. The year after that, she again backed Thao in his ill-fated bid

to become St. Paul's first Hmong American mayor. LyLy Vang-Yang worked in opposition, gathering votes for Mayor Melvin Carter.

Vang-Yang had been the only Hmong woman on Carter's team, an alliance that prompted tension both internal and external. She recalls weighing both candidates at length, agonizing over her own Hmong heritage, and ultimately choosing to heed her gut that Carter's values aligned most closely with her own.

"It does matter that when we help to elect people that represent us, we can co-govern with them and hold them accountable," she says of her distaste for loyalties forged from lowest common denominators. "And just using that we have a shared identity isn't always the thing that gets us there."

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Nevertheless, Hmong and non-Hmong alike thought her choice peculiar. She was asked ad nauseum, “Why Melvin and not Dai?” and told, “You’re Hmong,” as if she didn’t know.

“I gave her props,” says Yang. “I was like, ‘Dude, as much as people secretly supported him who were Hmong, you were the only one who stuck your neck out there.’ But we knew of LyLy. Everyone knew of LyLy.”

Both women eventually found their way to Take Action Minnesota, which trains progressive candidates in grassroots organizing under the notion that politics needs to be wrested from big money and given back to regular people.

They’ve since launched a new group called Hmong Women Disrupt. It’s meant to be a catch-all for activists to air dilemmas of identity politics that prevent Hmong women from being seen for their individuality, work ethic, and experience—and to bring discussions often had in private to the public arena.

There’s the pressure to fall behind Hmong candidates regardless of better-fitting alternatives. And the reality that their community would sooner mobilize behind a man than a woman, as in 2013 when HmongPages reported that supporters of Dai Thao had asked his opponent, Kazoua Kong-Thao, to drop out of their



ZOE PRINDS-FLASH

St. Paul City Council race because she’s a woman.

In 2018, Cindy Yang ran for the Minnesota House. She’d decided in a moment of DFL upheaval as Attorney General Lori Swanson declared her bid for governor, State Rep. Debra Hilstrom moved to succeed Swanson, and a district that

Terri Thao: “I want to do development without displacement.”

included Yang’s hometown of Brooklyn Center opened for fresh representation. Unbeknownst to Yang, fellow community organizer Samantha Vang had the

same idea. They announced competing campaigns on the same day. Ultimately, Vang edged out Yang in the DFL primary by just 200 votes.




It wasn’t until some time later that Cindy Yang found the words to express the unsettling dynamics of that race. Rumors suggested the two women had to dislike each other personally if they were willing to risk splitting a finite Hmong vote. Yet neither campaign ever issued an attack ad, and had in fact agreed beforehand to run a clean race, Samantha Vang says.

The painful implication: Their campaigns were redundant, with Hmong lacking the muscle to handle more than a single option.

“I told people, ‘Hey, two Hmong women running a race is everything we ever dreamed of.’ That is the type of representation that we want,” Cindy Yang says. “But a lot of folks operate from a position of scarcity instead of abundance.”

The same dynamic has re-emerged in a council race on St. Paul’s East Side.

Ward 6 is about 60 percent people of color, with 40 percent of residents living at or below the poverty line. It was represented by Dan Bostrom from 1996 until his abrupt retirement last year. Now Terri Thao and Nelsie Yang are leading a pack of candidates in a seat open for the first time in nearly a quarter century. Judging

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ZOE PRINDS-FLASH

by fundraising goals, DFL endorsements, and the sheer makeup of yard signs, St. Paul will elect its first Hmong councilwoman on November 5.

It will be a milestone for whomever is most effective at captivating both mainstream and Hmong communities. The choice between two very different Hmong women will test voters' ability to study their qualifications beyond the obvious.

Terri Thao is a second-generation Hmong American. Her parents were civil servants for the city and county who also dabbled in operating a video rental store and restaurant. Her uncle ran an insurance business, tax service, and the Hmong Pages newspaper.

She spent 15 years at the nonprofit Nexus—formerly Payne-Lake Community Partners—which focused on revitalizing St. Paul's commercial corridors. Data pointed to the Twin Cities as being a great place to live. Her work involved trying to making that a reality for immigrants and refugees who'd taken advantage of relatively affordable housing to plant roots in blighted neighborhoods.

Former Mayor Chris Coleman appointed her to the city Planning Commission, where she practiced the Tetris game of housing, transit, and business development—while trying to divine St. Paul's future needs. She's eager to be a part of the Hillcrest Golf Club redevelopment, a \$10 million, 112-acre site in the neighborhood that the Port Authority has destined for job and housing creation.

"Here in the East Side, a lot of people talk about property values. That's because

Nelsie Yang: "I'm the only person in my race to make a commitment and believe that our schools should be fully funded."

in disinvested communities, when they appreciate, they're going to appreciate at higher levels, which translates into a higher tax bill," Terri Thao says. "I'm really intrigued and want to do development without displacement."

She envisions implementing policies like Minneapolis' inclusionary zoning, which calls for private rental developments to reserve a certain percentage of units for affordable housing. "At the end of the day, when we talk about deep, technical policy stuff, I would always go, 'Well, could I go home and explain this to my mother-in-law?' That to me is the litmus test."

Nelsie Yang is also a second-generation Hmong American, a grassroots organizer, renter, and—at 24 years old—the youngest person to ever run for St. Paul City Council.

Born to refugee parents who raised five children on the wages of medical device assembly workers, she attended public schools lacking in opportunities afforded to wealthier students, and experienced foreclosure in 2013 with the repossession of the family home in Brooklyn Park. "When I think about macro-level systems, we actually have large corporations like banks perpetuating racism and classism and targeting low-income families with predatory loans without actually caring for them," she says. "On top of that, we also have employers that choose not to

"Two Hmong women running a race is everything we dreamed of."



NOTHING BUT HEMP

New York Times and other outlets ask: Does CBD work?

One of the commonalities of the past months in the cannabis trade has been the need to consistently explain the possibilities and limitations of CBD.

Across the media landscape, features and exposés have proliferated as the phenomenon of CBD has reached new audiences of fervent supporters and customers. The most recent of these is from New York Times reporter Dawn MacKeen.

The story tells a complicated but promising story of excesses and real hope for relief within the new cannabidiol, or CBD, market.

CBD is a non-psychoactive relative of THC found in marijuana, and offers many of the relaxation and pain relief benefits of marijuana without getting users high.

The Times is able to trace CBD use back to 750 B.C., when it was used as a holistic remedy in similar ways as it is being turned to today.

Given the amazing true history of CBD and CBD's amazing progress since hemp was legalized in the U.S. in 2018 with the most recent Farm Bill, one would think the claims of CBD's uses would speak for themselves.

People all over the country and the world are using CBD for their anxiety, insomnia and chronic pain symptoms, but many of these benefits are reported mostly in testimonials and personalized takes.

The science that has been reported on the benefits of CBD has frequently come in the form of animal testing studies, or in small group surveys and control test with people. Therefore, the claims of some CBD purveyors can be overstated if they aren't careful, but this by no means discredits the substance's viability.

Dr. Brad Ingram of the University of Mississippi's Medical Center spoke with the Times about a new study of CBD's effects on children and teens with epilepsy.

"It's the monster that has taken over the room," Ingram said.

Expert sources told the New York Times the science of CBD use is promising but may be overhyped. The key is to stick with high-quality, pure products and avoid gimmicks, some say.

"CBD is not a scam," Institute of Mount Sinai's Addiction Institute Director Yasmin Hurd told the Times. "It has a potential medicinal value, but when we are putting it into mascara and putting it into tampons, for God's sake, to me, that's a scam."

If you would like to find the no-nonsense, no lies CBD products you can rely on, consider Nothing But Hemp.

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pay livable wages. These contributed to my own family's experience with foreclosure, but it's a part of the larger cloth."

She's running to ensure the East Side gets its fair share of resources, that it becomes a walkable community with properly paved roads, public transit that runs on renewable energy, small businesses with access to fair banking practices and low-interest startup rates, all-day recreational centers, and jobs for youth.

"I'm the only person in my race to make a commitment and actually believe that our schools should be fully funded," she says, promising bold leadership on issues of racial and gender equity.

According to campaign finance reports filed two weeks before election day, Nelsie Yang has raised \$95,000 to Terri Thao's \$53,000.

Prof. Lee Pao Xiong, founding director of Concordia University's Center for Hmong Studies, believes that while Terri Thao has proven herself in policy aptitude and earned the respect of mainstream leaders, Nelsie Yang has built more support among young progressives as well as Hmong elders. In a recent campaign video, she speaks perfect Hmong.

That's a shrewd approach, says Xiong, who considers the backing of patriarchs and war veterans—on whose merits the Hmong arrived in America—critical.

Traditionally, the Hmong have self-governed via a hierarchical clan structure comprising 18 families, each led by a male head. The clans nominate a representative to the 18 Clan Council, a nonprofit in which all families participate, settling conflicts, arbitrating reparations, and galvanizing collective action.

The Hmong community's built-in network translates naturally to political campaigns, Xiong says. Candidates who win the support of the patriarchs are guaranteed money, volunteers, and votes.

The documentary "The Time Is Right for Mee" captured this dynamic by tracking the strategy of Minnesota State Sen. Mee Moua, the first Hmong person elected to an American state legislature. To kickstart her campaign, she made her case to the Moua clan as the only woman in a room of male leaders.

"I'm your daughter. I'm not a threat to you," Mee Moua framed her candidacy. "I'm a child that has come out of your home. What I'm doing, it's for you. It's

not for me. It's for you and the good of our whole community."

Bo Thao-Urabe, executive director of the Coalition of Asian American Leaders, says the Hmong community still struggles with the perception that men are born leaders and women natural homemakers. In the old days, poor families couldn't afford to send all their children to secondary school, so while boys got education, girls learned how to be good housewives, mothers, and daughters-in-law.

Hmong candidates who win the support of the patricarchs are guaranteed money, volunteers, and votes.

The reality is that over the last 40 years in America, Hmong women have seized their access to higher education and become trailblazers, direct-

ing political campaigns and becoming school board members and state legislators. But those accomplishments aren't always recognized, Thao-Urabe says, and women haven't made as many gains in intercommunity politics because the younger ones grow up questioning the relevance of systems like the 18 clans.

Thao-Urabe is also a co-founder of the political action committee Maiv-PAC,

which endorses statewide candidates and provides a vehicle for Hmong women to talk about the multifaceted barriers they face in politics. "It's been my experience watching the trajectory, and knowing most of the candidates who have ever run, that it always starts with other Hmong women supporting them."

Terri Thao relies on the advice of her aunt, Choua Lee, who in 1991 became the first Hmong American elected to any public office in the United States.

Lee's bid for the St. Paul school board came at a time when many Hmong students were acting as de facto translators between their teachers and non-English-speaking parents. Naturally, complaints of failing grades and truancy weren't effectively communicated. She wanted professional translators and cultural awareness for students, yet was met with resistance from prominent Hmong men.

"There were some male factions in the community who would just say, outright, 'If we're men and we can't even do that, what makes you think can? You're Hmong, first of all, a minority. You're a woman. And you're young.'"

Lee was just 23 when she prevailed, largely without widespread Hmong support. She recalls public praise from leaders after her victory, followed by private whispers doubting her ability. They taught



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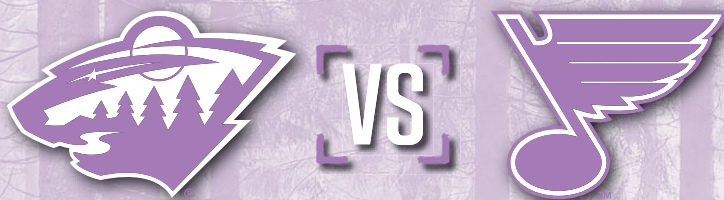


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her not to worry about pleasing everyone, because she could never win in the eyes of those who couldn't see past her most basic identity.

"The decisions I'd make would not just impact my Hmong community—they'd impact the entire community. And that becomes a part of your burden," Lee tells Terri Thao. "You run for the East Side. It must be your priority. At the same time you're allocating to the East Side, you're also taking away from the other communities, so how do you balance that?"

"Campaigning, you can promise people all these things, but at the end of the day, there is a bigger morality out there that you also have to be aware of."

Nelsie Yang recruited her clan early on before branching out to other Hmong families. She struggled with the apparent contradiction of campaigning on gender equity in public, then going home to cook and clean—duties still largely conferred to women.

"I felt like I wasn't living out my values in both my public and my private life. But then I realized, a few years after I started organizing, that I also had to bring people along. With my family too, I had to help them see that gender equity is something really important, and changing the tradition within our Hmong people isn't something that can be done overnight."

When his Hmong students criticize the patriarchal clan structure, Lee Pao Xiong reminds them to give it time. The Hmong have survived this way for 5,000 years, and have only become Americans in the last 50. Today the most powerful Hmong in the world—the president of the National Assembly of Laos—is a woman. Meanwhile, the United States has yet to elect a female president, Minnesota has never had a female governor, and St. Paul has never had a female mayor.

If nothing else, enlisting clan leaders is a display of diplomacy skills, he says.

"I think if you have the backing of the

LyLy Vang-Yang (left) and Cindy Yang worked on opposing sides of St. Paul's most recent mayoral race.

community through the elders, the respect for the elders, who honor the elders, you're going to do well. Those who shun the elders, it'll be much harder to access the community."


St. Paul Councilman Dai Thao says he has no knowledge of allegations that sexism played a role in his 2013 election. But he does recall fears that two Hmong candidates would split their support—echoes of which he hears in the Ward 6 race.

Contrary to popular opinion, it's more strategic to offer multiple Hmong candidates in a ranked choice election because their collective energy brings out more Hmong voters, he says.

The hope is that this race can show the East Side's Hmong that they have true choice, as well as a responsibility to inform that choice with study of the candidates, says Mai Chong Xiong, board chair of Take Action.

While she tries to balance work and her after-hours domestic roles as a traditional daughter-in-law, Xiong says she doesn't feel completely apologetic when chores fall to the wayside of her public life. The small ways in which Hmong women reject tradition can feel deviant and disorderly, but venting them is how Hmong Women Disrupt hopes to erode the traditions that hold them down.

"At the end of the day, people are really proud when any Hmong person can take on a leadership role," says LyLy Vang-Yang. "What I'm not so clear on is what does it look like when a Hmong woman is bold and unapologetic, takes a stance, and rejects some of our community norms."

"I believe in my community and our ability to do better. I wouldn't do this work if I didn't." 



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BY SARAH BRUMBLE

Anyone who's met him knows Kieran Folliard can spin a yarn. But the Irishman has also spent a lifetime building successful businesses here in Minnesota—founding the Liffey, Kieran's, the Local, and 2 Gingers Whiskey—where he put in the work to back up those stories.

In his latest venture these strengths, at last, converge. The story of each meal is Kieran's Kitchen.

Since opening on August 2 in northeast Minneapolis' Food Building, Kieran's Kitchen has been more than a “farm-to-table restaurant.” The counter service-style market (featuring an open kitchen and full bar serving neighborhood craft beer, plus cocktails from Twin Cities distilleries spiked with Skinny Jake's honey) has positioned itself on the frontier of localism more than any trendy moniker conveys.

While produce arrives from growers within a 45-minute radius of the Cities, each of the menus' primary ingredients—from early morning breakfast to the heartier full menu served from 11 a.m. on—travels maybe 300 yards to reach diners' mouths.

Housed just down the hall are Baker's Field Flour & Bread, Alemar Cheese, and Red Table Meat Co. Separately, these artisans represent the pinnacle of their respective crafts. All had built respected reputations by quietly supplying high-end restaurants as far away as Los Angeles, but Folliard felt they weren't receiving their due at home. They'd been so close and yet so far from stepping into the local spotlight—not to mention making one hell of a sandwich together.

But at Kieran's Kitchen, their story—and the story of good food on the whole—touches all senses via the Food Hall. Customers can roam the space to witness churning vats separating curd from whey at Alemar's workspace, Red Table's methods for curing ham on full display, and skylights pointing toward Skinny Jake's rooftop beehives.

Breaking down barriers between the chain of supply and consumption challenges diners' notions of participation. This tension elevates Kieran's Kitchen to the realm of destination dining, where in the hands of anyone besides Folliard, it would simply seem like a deli.

But trying to fit so much on a dinner plate is no easy task. Which may be why Folliard, on opening day, told me he “should have gone fishing.”

Diners will disagree with him, no doubt. In the capable hands of chef Ian Gray, the

MASTERS OF CRAFT

Hyper-local food finds a champion in Kieran's Kitchen



LUCY HAWTHORNE

frisson of ideals meeting reality produces some of the most flavorful food in the Cities.

Gray's strength is also my burden, here, in promising what lies in store for you. Though cheese, fresh flour, and meat remain constants, supplementary ingredients may pivot to accompany daily deliveries from farmers. Given the establishment's dedication to intentionality and sourcing ingredients, Gray's is a game of constant, subtle *Iron Chef*-ing.

Further complicating matters was a surprise menu switch accompanying shoulder season and the harvest. This made mere memories of late-summer standout dishes like a roasted sweet corn chowder reminiscent of esquites plumped by Alemar's creme fraiche, or an inspired Vietnamese-tinged

cold noodle salad blessed with bands of cucumbers and blazing hot peppers dressed in a barely there vinaigrette.

That said, across months of dining at Kieran's Kitchen, dishes ranged from very good to transcendent, even if a certain balance of vegetables may vary from visit to visit.

The menu is most interesting when multiple purveyors from down the hall collide, often in unexpected forms, as is the case with perennial favorites like the Smoked Carrot Sandwich and the Spicy Cream Cheese Dumplings. In the sandwich, ribbons of the vegetable are layered over toasted rye from Baker's Field, accompanied by Alemar's gentle, creamy brie. Its magic lies in slow-smoking the vegetable over wood planks to impart an almost meaty

flavor that complements carrots' natural sweetness, without sacrificing tooth in the process. Reader, your author never expected to find herself a “carrot sandwich person,” but such is the power this place commands.

Those dumplings pull from pierogi tradition in form, arriving as a series of tender dough pouches puffing with cream cheese made specially for Kieran's Kitchen. Don't be fooled, though: While they're smothered in sauteed pepper slices and pickled onions, these darlings take a bath in a pepper sauce that, as culinary

KIERAN'S KITCHEN

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kieranskitchen.com

director Zach Dunphy

mentioned, can be delightfully un-Minnesotan depending on the batch. Between the sauce's heat and a near-salad of herbs topping everything, the idea that these have kin in pierogi becomes but a flicker.

The “Ham Hock Ravioli” might not be the most appetizingly named dish, but on the plate, it sings. Apprehensions of clunky meats are laid to rest by a hock-jus christening giant ravioli, crowned by blue cheese-butter and a fistful of port-fig jewels the size of thumbs. Like all the pastas at Kieran's Kitchen, the ravioli's flour is milled daily, lending a richness of flavor that can't be matched locally. Two thick slices of half-charred bread primed for sopping arrive as garnish, along with an “optional” ramekin full of butter worth shamelessly bringing home.

Purists should choose to play charcuterie roulette with the Abundance Board, which comes in two sizes—neither intended for loners. Choose from any of the day's selections of Red Table meats like coppa or Pork Queen, and Alemar's cheeses in the market's case, paired with whatever fresh ferments happen to be on hand, and go to town.

Plates hailing from so many disparate cultures shouldn't translate into a single meal so smoothly. But repeating, simple elements—whether carrots or mushrooms in myriad forms, or mild cheese cropping up as a spread here, a filling there—easily bind the dishes together, like a folk song's refrain uniting disparate generations.

This touch of the ancient and timeless lends Kieran's Kitchen a visionary air. By sending customers out the door with a doughnut for the road, or bellies stuffed with (and like) ravioli, history and work sublimates into hard-to-replicate beauty. For this, Folliard and Gray have given us tools to better recall such meals, and the craftspeople behind them, on the road ahead. **E**

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NOV 01

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W/ ERNEST, JENNA PAULETTE

NOV 02

RA RA RIOT
W/ BAYONNE, WHOSAH

NOV 08

ALEX CAMERON
W/ HOLIDAY SIDEWINDER, EMILY PANIC

NOV 09

HILLTOP HOODS
W/ ADRIAN EAGLE

NOV 12

R.A.P. FERREIRA (FKA MILO)
W/ KRISTOFF KRANE, ALFRED BANKS

OCT 30

MAXO KREAM
W/ Q DA FOOL, SLAYER

NOV 03

THAT '70s SHOW
W/ LAST IMPORT, GULLY BOYS, THE SHACKLETONS, DJ TROPHY KNIFE

OCT 31

LISA PRANK
W/ KITTEN FOREVER, REAL NUMBERS

NOV 05

TURF CLUB

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OCT 30

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NOV 01

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NOV 01

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W/ GRAYSON FOSTER

NOV 06

IYA TERRA
W/ RIES BROTHERS, FOR PEACE BAND

NOV 02

1349
W/ UADA, CLOAK, PULCHRA MORTE

NOV 03

THE BUILDING
W/ HEATHER WOODS BRODERICK

NOV 04

MAGIC SWORD
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NOV 02

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NOV 07

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OCT 31

SPORTS TEAM
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Icehouse MPLS

NOV 01

RIPE
W/ CASTLECOMER
AMSTERDAM BAR & HALL

NOV 02

RACHAEL & VILRAY
W/ AKIE BERMISS
THE CEDAR CULTURAL CENTER

NOV 03

PRATEEK KUHAD
W/ PETER GROENWALD
THE CEDAR CULTURAL CENTER

NOV 11

A LIST

FRIDAY Three giant art fests in Northeast p. 23

SATURDAY Wits returns for one night p. 25

SUNDAY Dark Arts Festival p. 25

WEDNESDAY 10.30

COMEDY

NATE ABSHIRE

ACME COMEDY CO.

Big things are happening for locally based comic Nate Abshire, who may not be locally based for long. "I'm getting ready to record my first album," he says. The decision to finally record came after much introspection. "I don't want to say that I don't work that hard," he explains, "but I don't polish jokes that much, and I move on a little bit sooner than maybe I should." The challenge in organizing his upcoming gig at Acme Comedy Co. has been putting it all together in a way that will make sense. "It's mostly been about getting all the jokes into a set more cohesively than I usually do. Normally I'm a lot looser." The album recording is also a way to mark a new era of his career. "The stuff I have now is more storytelling, and I'm excited to move on stylistically." Abshire, a native of Louisiana, came to the Twin Cities for college and never left. "I just love this city," he adds. However, he plans to take, as he calls it, a gap year and move to bigger market like New York, Los Angeles, or perhaps Denver. "I haven't quite decided," he notes. Catch him while you can. 8 p.m. Wednesday through Saturday; 10:30 p.m. Friday and Saturday. \$15-\$20. 708 N. First St., Minneapolis; 612-338-6393. **Through Saturday —P.F. WILSON**

THURSDAY 10.31

HALLOWEEN

HALLOWEEN PARTY AND COSTUME CONTEST

FIRST AVENUE

On any given night, First Avenue's dance floor is a pretty entertaining site. On Halloween, it's even better, as zombies, Tetris pieces, walking puns, and this year's pop-culture hits will be drinking, grooving, and chilling in one place. Be sure to come in your All Hallow's Eve best, because people don't fuck around here when it comes to cool looks. Cash prizes will be awarded

Jonathan Herrera Soto closes his show by removing the images of missing and murdered journalists, temporarily etched into the floor, at Mia.



COURTESY OF MIA

to the best costumes, and the contest is fierce. There's plenty of fun to be had if that's not your thing, however, with lots of spectacle, friendly crowds, multiple bars, and DJ sets from Espada, Mike 2600, Rowsheen, Lenka Paris, Smitty, and Roy Freedom. 18+. 8 p.m. \$10-\$15/\$20 at the door. First Avenue,

701 First Ave. N., Minneapolis; 612-338-8388. —JESSICA ARMBRUSTER

HALLOWEEN

HALLOWEEN BARHOPPING

VARIOUS LOCATIONS

For adults who like to celebrate Halloween with a costume and a little

booze, you have options this Halloween. A few possibilities: Norseman Distillery (451 Taft St. NE, Minneapolis) will be throwing a three-day celebration this week, offering a mix of free and ticketed events. Things kick off on Thursday from 6 to 8 p.m. with a spooky new cocktail menu and a juried art show reception. On Friday, the venue will offer a (ticketed) *Harry Potter*-themed cocktail class. Saturday's festivities include a family- and dog-friendly afternoon featuring a pet costume parade, followed by a (ticketed) 21+ evening shindig hosted by Flip Phone. Over in St. Paul, Can Can Wonderland (755 Prior Ave. N.) will throw a Halloween soiree with aerial performances, smoking drinks made with dry ice, a costume contest, DJ tunes, tarot readings, and a vintage pop-up. Check it out for \$5 from 4 to 11 p.m. If beer joints are more your thing, you might want to stop by Bull's Horn (4563 S. 34th Ave., Minneapolis), where they'll have psychics and astrologists, spooky music, a scary selfie station, and the chance to win a free beer each day for a year. —JESSICA ARMBRUSTER

DANCE

NOTES FROM A SÉANCE: A HALLOWEEN DELIGHT

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Shapiro & Smith Dance reprises a sublimely spooky dance-theater work that zeros in on a 19th-century pop-culture celebrity: Russian occultist Helena Blavatsky. In *Notes From a Seance*, Madame B. reigns supreme over a group of seekers who fall prey to the charlatan side of spiritualism. Card readings, magic tricks, and sensual diversions are on offer at Elysium, the ancestral home of the Professor, a man who is brought to heel by powerful women. Other seekers include a Jesuit, a visionary, an acolyte, and a saucy girl expelled from convent school. The acolyte's tongue-in-cheek letters home reveal an idea as true today as 150 years ago: Scam artists rule because fools permit it. Beautifully crafted movement in the

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MAX HAYNES

CONTINUED FROM THURSDAY ►

service of divine silliness evolves into satanic rituals, including a baptism at midnight, demonic exorcism, and ecstatic possession. What more do you need for your Halloween fix? Especially when it's performed by the company's splendid dancer-actors, accompanied by Scott Killian's beguiling music and witty text by Paul Selig. 8 p.m. Thursday through Saturday. \$20; \$10 students; Halloween tickets are two-for-one. 500 21st Ave. S., Minneapolis; 612-624-5060. **Through Saturday —LINDA SHAPIRO**

THEATER

FEED YOUR HEAD

SPARKLE THEATRICALS

Alice in Wonderland's Mad Hatter tea party is the inspiration for Sparkle Theatrical's new production, *Feed Your Head*, an immersive performance where the audience becomes part of the show. At this curious event, you'll be cast as a new employee of the Best Butter Company. Your guide, Bunny, is your orientation leader. As you follow her on your tour, you'll smell, see, hear, and taste things along the way. That's thanks to eats from Rochdale Farms and Baker's Field, and scent design by the Olfactory Scent Studio. *Feed Your Head* is going to eventually become a film and virtual reality experience; this is your chance to check out the first phase of a bigger project. So enter this dream world made reality by writer J.J. Kaiser, director C.J. Renner, and a team of designers, illusionists, and visionaries. There will be a preview night with shows at 6:30 and 8 p.m. on Wednesday,

October 30. Find tickets at and more information at www.feedyourhead.show. 6:30, 8, and 9:30 p.m. Thursday through Saturday. \$35. 2306 Robbins St., St. Paul. **Through Saturday —SHEILA REGAN**

THEATER

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Now in its 26th year, the BareBones Halloween Extravaganza is a beloved event that is a seasonal must-see for many. Each year, the story typically dives into themes of death, remembrance, and mourning, but with a tone that is somehow both whimsical and edgy. The puppets are a sight to behold, as things like large-scale skeletons, giant sugar skulls, and apparitions make their way to peace along their illuminated journey. Each event is followed by free hot food from Sister's Camelot, though you can bring a thermos of hot chocolate as well. Tickets are pay-as-able at the event, but if you have accessibility questions, you can email halloween@barebonespuppets.org. Gates open at 6:30 p.m. each night on Thursday and Saturday. \$10-\$20 suggested donation. 1305 S. Mississippi Blvd., North Gate, St. Paul. **Also Saturday —JESSICA ARMBRUSTER**

COMEDY

JACK JR.

RICK BRONSON'S HOUSE OF COMEDY Comedian Jack Assadourian, better known by his stage name Jack Jr., was destined to be in the family business. Growing up, his parents

CONTINUED ON PAGE 23 ►

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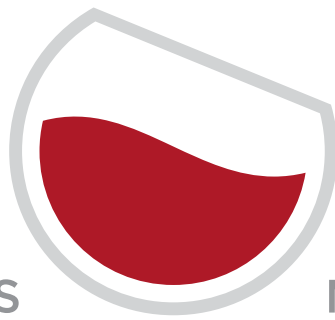
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Aldo Moroni, shown here working on a project in 2010, reflects on his 45-year career this week.

STAR TRIBUNE/BRUCE BISPING

CONTINUED FROM THURSDAY ►

owned the Ha Ha Comedy Cafe in North Hollywood. Jack still performs there, hosting a regular Wednesday night show. That's when he's not headlining clubs across the country or featuring for pals like Jeff Garcia, Brandon T. Jackson, or Damon Wayans Jr. "When I was little," he tells an audience, "I thought I was white, because I lived in a white neighborhood, and all my friends were white." Jack is of Mexican, Lebanese, and Armenian heritage. "I'm jealous of white people," he continues. "You're all so happy. Your holidays are amazing. It looks like an episode of *7th Heaven*. Everyone's on time, everyone knows each other. My house isn't like that. At my house we have Mexicans, Armenians, Lebanese, a black guy, a baby mama, kids running around everywhere. It feels like you're at the DMV." 7:30 p.m. Thursday and Friday; 9:45 p.m. Friday; 7 p.m. Saturday and Sunday; 8:30 p.m. Saturday. \$16-\$23. 408 E. Broadway, Mall of America, Bloomington; 952-858-8558. **Through Sunday** —P.F. WILSON

FRIDAY 11.1

ART/FESTIVAL

ART ATTACK/CALIFORNIA DREAMING/OPEN CASKET

VARIOUS LOCATIONS

This weekend, three buildings housing nearly 500 artist studios will open their doors, inviting people to see exactly what Northeast creatives have been up to. Hot off the announcement that the building has been purchased by Artspace, Northrup King Studios (1500 Jackson St. NE) hosts Art Attack,

showcasing a mind-boggling 350 artists. Check out ceramic work ranging from practical mugs to showy large-scale sculptures, giftable jewelry, and dog portraits in a variety of styles. Over at the California Building (2205 California St. NE) is California Dreaming, featuring more than 50 open work areas, studios, and shops. Check out Aldo Moroni's collection reflecting on his 45 years creating work in Minneapolis. Drink some java at Mojo Coffee, and score some affordable art at Studio 201's show and sale. You may want to end your day (or start your evening!) at Open Casket, Casket Arts Community's (681 17th Ave. NE) art party highlighting 80-plus artists. On the fourth floor you'll discover free live music, while the basement will offer special cocktails and burlesque performances. On the street, food trucks will be selling smoked meats and Egyptian treats. 5 to 10 p.m. Friday; noon to 8 p.m. Saturday; noon to 5 p.m. Sunday. Free. **Through Sunday** —JESSICA ARMBRUSTER

THEATER

THE SONG OF SUMMER

MIXED BLOOD THEATRE

Forward-looking Twin Cities theater companies have been rushing to present the work of playwright Lauren Yee, and no wonder: Her pieces blend personal stories with a historical sweep and a highly relatable enthusiasm for pop culture. Last winter the Guthrie gave an extravagant production to *The Great Leap*, and this season's Mixed Blood production of *The Song of Summer* will be followed by Ten Thousand Things doing *The Hatmaker's Wife* and a

CONTINUED ON PAGE 24 ►

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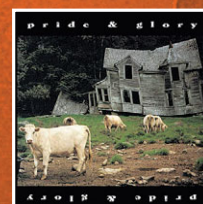
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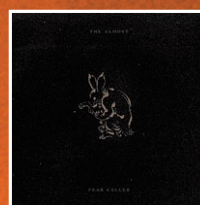
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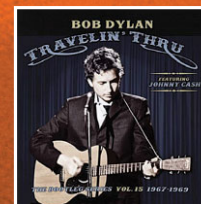
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A-LIST



Carmen and Lola
screens at Cine
Latino Fest.

IMAGE COURTESY MSP FILM SOCIETY

CONTINUED FROM FRIDAY ►

Jungle/Mu co-production of *Cambodian Rock Band. The Song of Summer* is a romcom that pairs a returning rock star with a hometown friend who might be something more. When the play premiered earlier this spring in Rhode Island, audiences swooned, comparing it to a Hallmark card—in a good way. The show's sincere emotions coexist with a timely consideration of what artists and audiences do when an undeniable earworm has some problematic lyrics. “[It’s] simultaneously heartwarming and breathtaking,” promises Mixed Blood artistic director Jack Reuler. 7:30 p.m. Wednesdays through Saturdays; 4 p.m. Saturdays; 2 p.m. Sundays. \$35. 1501 Fourth St. S., Minneapolis; 612-338-6131. **Through November 24 —JAY GABLER**

FESTIVAL/FILM CINE LATINO FILM FESTIVAL 2019

ST. ANTHONY MAIN THEATRE

The state of international cinema has never been quite so varied, in part thanks to the increased accessibility of filmmaking tools allowing aspiring artists to pursue their vision. This vitality continues to propel the Cine Latino Film Festival, now in its seventh year under the Film Society of Minneapolis/St. Paul. The weeklong schedule of screenings includes some 14 features, each contributing to this year's theme of cinema with a conscience. Standouts among the eclectic lineup include Chilean documentary *The Cordillera of Dreams* (winner of Best Documentary at the 2019 Cannes Film Festival), the Roma/lesbian drama

Carmen and Lola (winner of Best Supporting Actress and Best New Director at the 2019 Goya Awards), and the blended animation/live-action piece *Another Day of Life* (winner of Best Animated Feature at the 2019 Goya and European Awards). Enhancing this year's fest are special events, including a panel featuring four female filmmakers (Marcela Arteuga, Linda Goldstein Knowlton, Veronica Haro, and Ruth Zachs) who will discuss filmmaking as a medium for storytelling. Find tickets, times, and more info at mspfilm.org. \$6-\$12 general admission; \$20 opening night; ticket packages range from \$20 to \$75. 115 Main St. SE, Minneapolis; 612-331-4723. **Through November 7 —BRAD RICHASON**

COMEDY

LORELEI RAMIREZ

PHOENIX THEATER

Art, standup comedy, writing: Lorelei Ramirez does it all for *Alive! (For Now)*. Growing up, Ramirez was interested in art, and went to New York City to attend art school. Then reality set in. “I found out that it’s really hard to do art if you’re not someone from money,” they explain. “To actually have a career in art is really hard. I still have friends that are in the scene, and they are struggling financially.” Ramirez still pursued art, but also got interested in standup comedy and writing. For the former, they didn’t go to clubs, instead creating shows independently with friends, mostly in the LGBTQ community. “We were just fooling around,” they note, “and would occasionally perform at clubs. But club spaces can be toxic.” For Ramirez’s show at Phoenix Theater,

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A-LIST

fans will be treated to a wide variety of their talents. "It's mixture of my standup, drawing, poetry, and I do some crowd-work stuff." The show was developed when Ramirez was asked by a community theater if they could indeed put all of their disciplines together in one show. "That was the challenge, and it's the first time I've successfully done it." 7 p.m. \$17-\$20. 2605 Hennepin Ave., Minneapolis; 612-377-2285. —P.F. WILSON

SATURDAY 11.2

PERFORMANCE

WITS REUNION SHOW

FITZGERALD THEATER

Created and hosted by John Moe, Wits had a five-year run (2010-15) that offered a singular blend of improv comedy, freewheeling conversations, and refreshingly laid-back concerts. Premised on an eclectic pairing of adept artists (particularly musicians, comedians, actors, and writers), Wits regularly generated moments of inspired absurdity as participants riffed off one another, deriving off-the-cuff spontaneity from sketches, stories, and songs. The free-form levity was a rare treat for those audiences bearing witness to a one-of-a-kind performance—and a challenge to the more structured mandates of national broadcasting. As such, it's particularly fitting that the highly anticipated Wits Reunion Show will not be transmitted or streamed. The one-night-only performance (held at the program's original home, the Fitz) is a strictly live event, one that promises to reprise such signature features as "Murder Cat," "Pop Song Correspondences," and "Cop Squadron." The biggest question centers on the guest list. Moe has been secretive, promising only that humorist John Hodgman will be joined by a number of surprise participants. 7 p.m. \$35-\$55. 10 E. Exchange St., St. Paul; 651-370-2953. —BRAD RICHASON

SUNDAY 11.3

PERFORMANCE

JONATHAN HERRERA SOTO

MINNEAPOLIS INSTITUTE OF ART

Jonathan Herrera Soto's exhibition, "In Between/Underneath (Entremedio/ Por Debajo)," is simply stunning. Housed at the Minneapolis Institute of Art's MAEP Gallery, the show features the faces of missing and murdered journalists, temporarily etched into the floor. There's also a wall of text-based print works and other objects.

Together, the collection feels like a vigil, but also a call to action. For the last day of the show, Herrera Soto will give an all-day performance. He will work on cleaning the floors and erasing the remainder of the installation, much of which has been worn away already as visitors were allowed to step and walk on the etchings. The installation serves as a reminder that speaking truth to power is still a dangerous practice, and deserves all the support we can give to it. 11 a.m.

to 5 p.m. Free. 2400 Third Ave. S., in the MAEP Galleries, Minneapolis; 612-870-3000. —SHEILA REGAN

ART/HALLOWEEN

DARK ARTS FESTIVAL 2019

A-MILL ARTIST LOFT BUILDING

Folks looking to cap off Halloween weekend with something just a little bit spooky can check out this pop-up happening on Sunday. A family-friendly event, the Dark Arts Festival will showcase 20 local artists giving macabre

takes on makers' arts. So whether you're looking for a kinda gross zombie portrait, darkly enchanting jewelry, cute yet sinister embroidery pieces, ominous salvaged home goods, or some horrifying ceramics with teeth, you'll have plenty to explore and consider. Live music and performances will keep crowds entertained, as will hands-on craft sessions, tarot readings, and face-painting for kids. Noon to 8 p.m. Free. 315 SE Main St., Minneapolis; 612-339-1034. —JESSICA ARMBRUSTER

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HITLER YOUTH

Jojo Rabbit laughs in the face of fascism to better understand it



KIMBERLEY FRENCH / TWENTIETH CENTURY FOX

BY TONY LIBERA

It's totally normal for a kid to have an imaginary friend—unless that friend is, say, Adolf Hitler.

In real life, a child play-palling around with the king of Nazi shitheads would be not only weird but objectively horrifying. So of course director Taika Waititi found a way to make it funny.

A self-billed anti-hate satire, *Jojo Rabbit* tells the story of Johannes “Jojo” Betzler (Roman Griffin Davis), a 10-year-old boy so brainwashed by Nazi propaganda that his passions manifest as an immature and cartoonish Hitler (Waititi wearing some truly disturbing blue contact lenses). Jojo’s fanaticism propels him through Hitler Youth camp, yet his kind heart and absent father—a guy some have labeled a deserter—stir up feelings of inadequacy.

Bestie Hitler pops in now and again to offer pep talks and cigarettes, but when Jojo injures himself and discovers a Jewish

girl (Thomasin McKenzie) who his mother (Scarlett Johansson) has been hiding in their home, neither the boy nor his imaginary Führer knows what to do.

After Disney’s acquisition of Fox earlier this year, rumors swirled that Mouse execs were uncomfortable adding this film to the stable. However, there’s nothing so objectionable in *Jojo Rabbit* that suggests potential discomfort would impact its release, or that audiences should be concerned about the movie. Presenting subject matter as delicate as the Holocaust and Nazism with a comedic slant is bound to upset some, but there’s always method to Waititi’s madness.

And his irreverence is, of course, motivated here. To lampoon “The Third Reich” is to defang it, and while doing so in 2019 may seem like beating a dead horse, Waititi’s clearly looking to draw modern parallels. *Jojo Rabbit* enters into the long tradition of Nazi-mocking—from

Charlie Chaplin to *Hogan’s Heroes*—in an effort to not only laugh in the face of contemporary fascism but to better understand it. While we may be a ways off from children learning laughably bullshit facts about Others in school or being armed for battle like Jojo and his buddy Yorkie (Archie Yates), it would be wonderful to never reach that point.

To that end, eyeing Nazi Germany through an indoctrinated kid offers plenty of food for thought. Yes, *Jojo Rabbit* is funny—but like Waititi’s larger body of work it’s also incredibly heartfelt. From *Boy to Hunt for the Wilderpeople* and even *Thor: Ragnarok*, he’s proven better than anyone at sussing out boyhood insecurities and/or father issues and relating them to a bigger picture. It goes without saying that Nazism is bad, but a failing of too many World War II-era movies is a reluctance to explore any shade of gray beyond that. Nazis are often shown as

JOJO RABBIT

directed by Taika Waititi
area theaters, now playing

one-dimensional good-guy cannon fodder or automatons in search of occult relics, and while those roles certainly have their place in film, *Jojo Rabbit* wants a more profound takeaway. By looking at the effects of an evil ideology on a child who would otherwise be a good person, Waititi wonders how we might combat that phenomenon. After all, evil of that magnitude is almost always learned.

There’s nothing wrong with contextualizing horrors through humor so long as it’s done tactfully and with a moral purpose. *Jojo Rabbit* checks both boxes. When Jojo asks his mom what the people hanging in town did to warrant such a fate, she replies: “What they could.” Some may find that message too simple, but now as ever it’s an important one. **A-**

SOMETIMES THEY COME BACK

TC Horror Fest continues to freak audiences out



Feminine Inhuman

DAN NORMAN

BY JAY GABLER

The Twin Cities Horror Festival is an annual incursion of short plays devoted to the unsettling, the macabre, the gruesome, and the terrifying. Ironically, it draws a warm and cozy community to the Southern Theater: audience members who chat beneath the dangling skeleton parts and listen to “Monster Mash” in the lobby while they wait for the next scary story to begin.

Not every town does this. In fact, according to stage announcements, at eight years strong ours is now the world’s longest-running horror theater festival. This year’s productions feature even more variety than usual, exploring a wide range of spooky scenarios.

Fans of *Midsommar* will want to check out *Incarnate*, which feels like a harvest-themed companion piece to Ari Aster’s new movie. It’s set in a cultish religious community that favors agricultural metaphors; you know it’s going to be good as soon as the priceless Lauren Anderson steps forth, spreads her arms, and joyfully cries, “Swing the sickle!” Another standout in the intensely committed cast

is Laura Mahler as a convert whose soul is clean but who’s not afraid to get her hands—and face—a little bloody.

Speaking of blood, Horror Fest fans know they can count on director Tyler Olsen-Highness to bring his signature gift for gory verisimilitude to the Southern stage each October. This year, Dangerous Productions reimagine *Frankenstein*, burrowing into the not-so-good doctor’s guilty mind while he goes about his limb-lopping business. The creature’s real-life creator, author Mary Shelley, gets to tell her story in *Amp*. Writer/actor Jody Christopherson never lets the momentum of her solo show slack, and thunderous production design perfectly sets the gothic scene.

Transfiguration is also the theme of *Bug Girl*, a visually stunning if narratively muddled life-size shadow play. Creator Liz Howls and her hardworking team create incredible effects as they play with scale on adjacent screen panels. The Southern’s movie screen also gets a welcome workout in plays like Four Humors’ *Rule of Three*, a timely segmented show that incorporates a scary vaping video and a sketch with what seems to

TWIN CITIES HORROR FESTIVAL

The Southern Theater
1420 S. Washington Ave., Minneapolis
Through November 3; tchrorfestival.com

be a highly interactive computer screen, warning of the dangers of deepfakes.

Other strong productions include *...And What Alice Found There*, the Winding Sheet Outfit’s exploration of Lewis Carroll’s troubling relationship with his title character; and *Feminine Inhuman*, a fun collection of dances dramatizing mythical female monsters, pairing Matthew Kessen’s lightly comedic folklore monologues with movement by Erin Sheppard Presents.

The fest also sees the welcome return of 2018 Fringe favorite *Geminae*, a supernatural space oddity that floats Leslie Vincent into what might become a zero-gravity tomb. Rogues Gallery Arts’ *Charcoal Moon* is a more standard interplanetary thriller, but writer/director Duck Washington steadily builds the suspense—to the chagrin of one opening-weekend audience member who succumbed to the mounting tension and discovered that in space, everyone can hear you fart. **LP**

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TÉA MCLAWHORN

TRY AND TRY AGAIN

Ahem are betting it all on their basement dreams

BY JERARD FAGERBERG

Once a week, Erik Anderson and Courtney Berndt meet Alyse Emanuel in her parents' basement and plug in their instruments. Upstairs, Emanuel's mother tends the stove as distorted guitar and sprightly chanting bleed up through the floor. After, they all eat ravioli together and snuggle the cat.

"It's the most wholesome ritual," Berndt says, beaming at her bandmates.

"We talk about proper vitamin D levels," Anderson adds.

It's a suitable conversation for a band who spends as much time underground as Ahem. It's been four years since Anderson and Emanuel first met and started writing songs, and they're still getting used to sunlight. Most of the music they've made, including 2016's debut EP *Just Wanna Be* and 2018's follow-up *Chutes and Ladders*, were written and recorded in the "windowless bunker" beneath Emanuel's childhood home.

In their basement music studio, there's a worn VHS of the Lemonheads, an influ-

ence you can hear in their music: Ahem are a pop band passed through a fuzz filter. Sunny and sweetly morose, they sound as though Len got caught in an existential downslide after recording "Steal My Sunshine."

"Ahem is so playful, and that's what being a kid is," Emanuel says. "Being playful, skinning your knees. It's a release. It's very cathartic."

Their story is quaint from the start. Ahem signed to Forged Artifacts after Anderson wrote an impassioned note to owner Matt Linden. They released two EPs, both recorded by fellow lo-fi believer Jordan Bleau (formerly of Frankie Teardrop, currently of Cheap Fantasy and Bathtub Cig). After their original bassist left, they connected with Brendt through punk nonprofit She Rock She Rock. All along, they've maintained their weekly dinners and buoyant attitude.

"Our path has just been trying again," Berndt says. "Just reaching out to people. There's so much imagination, so much 'what if?'"

That spirit is reflected in the title of their debut LP, *Try Again*, out November 1. As the name suggests, this is a record of enormous effort. An attempt to rise.

The album is Ahem's first to be professionally produced (recorded primarily at the Institute of Production & Recording) and the first they've pressed to vinyl. For practical reasons, Ahem don't tour, but they've booked a show at the Minneapolis Eagles Club to celebrate the release, and they've hired independent PR rep Jamie Coletta of No Earbuds to carry it beyond the Twin Cities.

Try Again doubts itself on the opening track, "Sideways," where Anderson sings about his constant struggle with anxiety, feeling like his life hasn't tracked right. But you wouldn't know it from the bouncy drums and jubilant upstrokes on the chorus. Shit, being sideways sounds like a blast when he and Berndt harmonize to sing, "Who needs to see straight anyway?"

"Ahem has always been about balancing the stress and the dark reality of adulthood," Anderson says. "It's about trying to find the space to remain imaginative and joyful while enduring the parts of life that are a struggle."

For Anderson, Emanuel, and Berndt, Ahem is a retreat—a glossy piece of magic they stash away when the ramparts of daily life wail down on them. Songs like "Twenty" give the three license to return to acting like

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with **AKIE BERMIS**
Doors 7pm / Show 7:30pm / All Ages / Seated / \$30 General Admission

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Friday, November 8
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with **Winnetka Bowling League**
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Saturday, November 9
The Cedar and KFAI Present
CHE APALACHE with **Mestifonía**
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Sunday, November 10
The Cedar and KFAI Present
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with **Javier Matos**
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Late Night // Friday, November 1 || 11:00 pm
DONNIE DARKO (2001)

Saturday Matinee, November 2 || 1:00 pm
COCOON (1985)

Friday, November 2 || 8:00 pm
MOMENTARY LAPSE OF FLOYD
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Sunday, November 3 || 2:00 pm
CAFETERIA CHRISTIAN PODCAST
W. NORA MCINERNEY & NATALIA TERFA

Sunday, November 3 || 7:30 pm
DEATH RIDES A HORSE (1967)
SCORED LIVE BY AL CHURCH + FRIENDS

Thursday, November 7 || 8:00 pm
HEATHERS (1988)
PRE-SCREENING MUSIC BY THE VON TRAMPS

Friday, November 8 || 7:30 pm
LASKA, SAL PARADISE & LAPDOGS
PRESENTED BY MCAD'S SABER MAGAZINE

Saturday Matinee, November 9 || 1:00 pm
CROUCHING TIGER, HIDDEN DRAGON (2000)

Saturday, November 9 || 7:00 pm
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MUSIC

reckless kids. "Wishing Well" feels like it was dislodged from the part of the heart you only access when nostalgia is all that can save you.

After practice, Anderson returns to the woods of the St. Croix Valley and his wife and 8-year-old son. He wakes up and goes to his day job as a book editor, a career he says "stresses [him] to the hilt." Emanuel heads off to her office at Mercury Mosaics, a handmade tile company where she does community outreach. Berndt drives to Eden Prairie High School, where she will teach until her maternity leave begins and she gives birth to her first child.

This dynamic is not unique to Ahem. Most working bands are forced to balance their dreams with what's achievable. There is a ledger of work, family, social life, and band that must be constantly maintained. And music is most easily and most often compromised on. But Ahem, in their jubilant escapism, are the evidence as to why it must be preserved.

"I give so much of my energy to others, it's good to feel the most authentic version of myself," Berndt says. "When I can carve out these weekly rituals for practice, it's how I maintain my identity."

"It's the tonic to our big burnout," says Anderson. "Even though we work really hard, the emotion of it isn't, 'Fuck, here's this other job.' It's not defined by someone else."

This attitude is inherently at odds with the effort it takes to release and promote a record. You can't operate on serendipity and nostalgia while employing a PR firm and trying to sell 12-inch records out of your car. Expectations invade. Anxiety rides with them. Suddenly you question why you made anything to begin with.

Try Again's bravest moment comes on album closer "Sunspots," a spare tune written on a sunny afternoon by the river that contemplates the temporality of beauty. It's the kind of conclusion you only come to as a songwriting father dumping your spare time into a band that exists as a way to avoid those responsibilities.

"Being a dad, all this shit gets mixed up when you think about losing or going away from the world," Anderson says. "But it also felt really beautiful."

These are the thoughts that sneak in when the mind strays. It can keep you from ever being satisfied if you let it. Anderson shivers when asked what his hopes are for Try Again, as if speaking them aloud would invite catastrophe.

"Should I be talking about all this dad stuff in a rock 'n' roll interview?" he wonders, mid-thought. The uncertainty suddenly courses its way through his mind.

Emanuel steps in with the kind of clarity only a fellow subterranean could provide.

"I want to still love it years from now," she says. "I want it to last." ☐

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THURSDAY OCTOBER 31

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DJ Mercury, The Rope & Morticia

SATURDAY NOVEMBER 2

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TUESDAY NOVEMBER 5 • 10:30PM • \$6

Heart Bones - Night 3

UPCOMING SHOWS

NOV 6 Every Damn Wednesday!

NOV 7 Savannah Smith, Meg Kirsch, Andy Cook

NOV 14 Ganser (Chi), Another Heaven, Finesse, Monica LaPlante

NOV 15 Think Fast! Improvised Freestyle Standup Comedy

NOV 16 Live Flamenco

NOV 23 Ringo Deathstarr

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FREE WILL ASTROLOGY

>> By Rob Breznysy

♈ ARIES (March 21-April 19): Do you have any skill in fulfilling the wishes and answering the prayers of your allies? Have you developed a capacity to tune in to what people want even when they themselves aren't sure of what they want? Do you sometimes have a knack for offering just the right gesture at the right time to help people do what they haven't been able to do under their own power? If you possess any of those aptitudes, now is an excellent time to put them in play. More than usual, you are needed as a catalyst, a transformer, an inspirational influence. Halloween costume suggestion: angel, fairy godmother, genie, benefactor.

♉ TAURUS (April 20-May 20): Author Amy Tan describes the magic moment when her muse appears and takes command: "I sense a subtle shift, a nudge to move over, and everything cracks open, the writing is freed, the language is full, resources are plentiful, ideas pour forth, and to be frank, some of these ideas surprise me. It seems as though the universe is my friend and is helping me write, its hand over mine." Even if you're not a creative artist, Taurus, I suspect you'll be offered intense visitations from a muse in the coming days. If you make yourself alert for and receptive to these potential blessings, you'll feel like you're being guided and fueled by a higher power. Halloween costume suggestion: your muse.

♊ GEMINI (May 21-June 20): More than a century ago, author Anton Chekhov wrote, "If many remedies are prescribed for an illness, you may be certain that the illness has no cure." Decades later, I wrote, "If you're frantically trying to heal yourself with a random flurry of half-assed remedies, you'll never cure what ails you. But if you sit still in a safe place and ask your inner genius to identify the one or two things you need to do to heal, you will find the cure." Halloween costume suggestion: physician, nurse, shaman, healer.

♋ CANCER (June 21-July 22): Cancerian artist Marc Chagall (1887-1985) was a playful visionary and a pioneer of modernism. He appealed to sophisticates despite being described as a dreamy, eccentric outsider who invented his own visual language. In the 1950s, Picasso observed that Chagall was one of the only painters who "understood what color really is." In 2017, one of Chagall's paintings sold for \$28.5 million. What was the secret to his success? "If I create from the heart, nearly everything works," he testified. "If from the head, almost nothing." Your current assignment, Cancerian, is to authorize your heart to rule everything you do. Halloween costume suggestion: a heart.

♌ LEO (July 23-Aug. 22): The Dead Sea, on the border of Jordan and Israel, is far saltier than the ocean. No fish or frogs live in it. But here and there on the lake's bottom are springs that exude fresh water. They support large, diverse communities of microbes. It's hard for divers to get down there and study the life forms, though. The water's so saline, they tend to float. So they carry 90 pounds of ballast that enables them to sink to the sea floor. I urge you to get inspired by all this, Leo. What would be the metaphorical equivalent for you of descending into the lower depths so as to research unexplored sources of vitality and excitement? Halloween costume suggestions: diver, spelunker, archaeologist.

♍ VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22): "We have stripped all things of their mystery and luminosity," lamented psychologist Carl Jung. "Nothing is holy any longer." In accordance with current astrological omens, Virgo, your assignment is to rebel against that mournful state of affairs. I hope you will devote some of your fine intelligence to restoring mystery and luminosity to the world in which you dwell. I hope you will find and create holiness that's worthy of your reverence and awe. Halloween costume suggestion: mage, priestess, poet, enchantrix, witch, alchemist, sacramentalist.

♎ LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22): "One language is never enough," says a Pashto proverb. How could it be, right? Each language has a specific structure and a finite vocabulary that limit its power to describe and understand the world. I think the same is true for religion: one is never enough. Why confine yourself to a single set of theories about spiritual matters when more will enable you to enlarge and deepen your perspective? With this in mind, Libra, I invite you to regard November as "One Is Never Enough Month" for you. Assume you need more of everything. Halloween costume suggestion: a bilingual Jewish Santa Claus; a pagan Sufi Buddha who intones prayers in three different languages.

♏ SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21): In his novel *Zone One*, Scorpio author Colson Whitehead writes, "A monster is a person who has stopped pretending." He means it in the worst sense possible: the emergence of the ugly beast who had been hiding behind social niceties. But I'm going to twist his meme for my own purposes. I propose that when you stop pretending and shed fake politeness, you may indeed resemble an ugly monster—but only temporarily. After the suppressed stuff gets free rein to yammer, it will relax and recede—and you will feel so cleansed and relieved that you'll naturally be able to express more of your monumental beauty. Halloween costume suggestion: your beautiful, fully exercised monster.

♐ SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21): "I am glad that I paid so little attention to good advice," testified poet Edna St. Vincent Millay. "Had I abided by it, I might have been saved from some of my most valuable mistakes." This is excellent advice for you. I suspect you're in the midst of either committing or learning from a valuable mistake. It's best if you don't interrupt yourself! Halloween costume suggestion: the personification or embodiment of your valuable mistake.

♑ CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19): Cleopatra was an ancient Egyptian queen who ruled for 21 years. She was probably a Capricorn. All you need to know about her modern reputation is that Kim Kardashian portrayed her as a sultry seductress in a photo spread in a fashion magazine. But the facts are that Cleopatra was a well-educated, multilingual political leader with strategic cunning. Among her many skills were poetry, philosophy, and mathematics. I propose we make the REAL Cleopatra your role model. Now is an excellent time to correct people's misunderstandings about you—and show people who you truly are. Halloween costume suggestion: your actual authentic self.

♒ AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18): Around the 11th hour of the 11th day of the 11th month, the 11th sign of the zodiac, Aquarius, will be capable of strenuous feats; will have the power to achieve a success that surpasses past successes; will be authorized to attempt a brave act of transcendence that renders a long-standing limitation irrelevant. As for the 11 days and 11 hours before that magic hour, the 11th sign of the zodiac will be smart to engage in fierce meditation and thorough preparation for the magic hour. And as for the 11 days and 11 hours afterward, the 11th sign should expend all possible effort to capitalize on the semi-miraculous breakthrough. Halloween costume suggestion: 11.

♓ PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20): Author Robert Musil made a surprising declaration: "A number of flawed individuals can often add up to a brilliant social unit." I propose we make that one of your mottos for the coming months. I think you have the potential to be a flawed but inspiring individual who'll serve as a dynamic force in assembling and nurturing a brilliant social unit. So let me ask you: What would be your dream-come-true of a brilliant social unit that is a fertile influence on you and everyone else in the unit? Halloween costume suggestion: ringleader, mastermind, orchestrator, or general.

freewillastrology@freewillastrology.com

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331club

wed : october 30

last wednesday bent paddle infusion
keg tapped at noon

7pm : "kfai house party presents"

bernie king and the guilty pleasures
9:30pm : lenz & frenz

(certain members of pert near sandstone,
farmhouse band, san souci quartet,
row of ducks)

thu : october 31

10pm : halloween night w/ the dj bob
marino, don greene, blinds

fri : november 1

7pm : laura and sean's
movie and music trivia

10pm : kiss the tiger, don babylon,
sleeping jesus

sat : november 2

7pm : trivia mafia presents
331 drinkin' spelling bee

10pm : speedweed, silt, bitter ghost

sun : november 3

3-5pm : corpse river (harry smith's
anthology of american folk music)

8pm : trivia mafia

mon : november 4

8pm : the roe family singers

10pm : doug otto and friends

tue : november 5

7-9pm : t.e.e. – tuesday early evening
kansas plates

9:30pm : 331 club and fair state brewing
cooperative present november conspiracy series
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UPCOMING

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• 18+

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1	2	3	4	5		6	7	8	9	10		11	12	13
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56						57	58				59			
60						61					62			
63						64					65			

VAMPING

BY BRENDAN EMMETT QUIGLEY

Across

- 1 Pickle juice
- 6 One who listens to reggae religiously?
- 11 Fruit spread
- 14 Uninspired
- 15 Apply to, as an ointment
- 16 Way back when
- 17 Wristwatch necessity
- 19 "How long does it take to warm up the car?"

Down

- 1 Grilling spots, for short
- 2 Pleasure seeker
- 3 Supreme Leader's nation
- 4 You might get one watching an unboxing video or a movie trailer debut
- 5 Clock-setting abbr.
- 6 Tempo fluctuations in music
- 7 Regarding
- 8 Start-up funds
- 9 Craggy point
- 10 Desperate teacher's question to a seemingly stumped classroom
- 11 Princess Leia killed him
- 12 See eye to eye
- 13 Blake ____ (President McCord's personal secretary on "Madam Secretary")
- 18 Two, to a Teuton
- 23 OK sch. founded by an evangelist
- 25 Rocky deposit
- 27 First floor apartment, maybe
- 28 Like out-there movies
- 29 Have to have

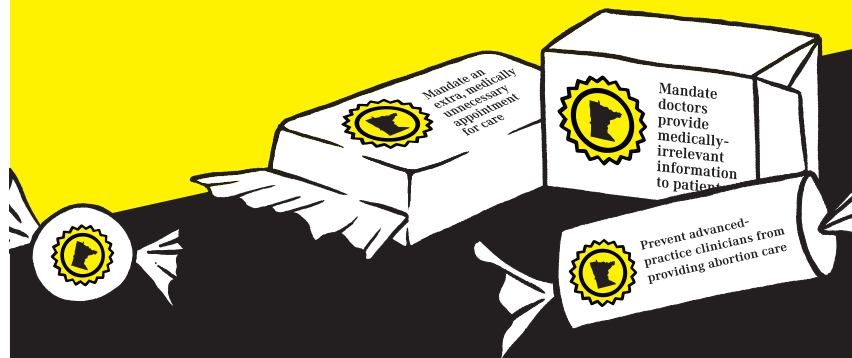
- 30 Game where the leads keep changing
- 31 Improves
- 33 Seminal 1983 hip-hop movie featuring many old-school legends
- 35 Cookie similar to Trader Joe's Joe-Joe's
- 36 Pita-and-lamb lunch
- 38 Head space?
- 39 Great slaughters
- 41 Ace Clayton
- 42 Tech company owned by Verizon
- 44 Ginnie ____
- 45 Kind of cloth bag
- 46 Its border with Canada is roughly 45 miles long
- 47 Its flag is shaped with two triangles
- 48 Cuckoo bananas
- 51 Put an end to
- 53 Cockpit predictions
- 54 Paris pop
- 55 Dinosaur whose teeth were the size of bananas
- 58 Previously, in verse
- 59 Lobster eggs

Last Week's Answer

C	H	A	N	G		R	E	P			B	U	G	S
A	U	D	I	O		A	L	E	C		U	G	L	I
B	E	A	C	H		B	E	T	H		X	O	U	T
		M	O	O	N	B	A	S	E	L	O	D	G	E
P	C	S		M	O	I		P	R	I	M			
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O	V	E	R	T			Y	A	W		S	E	E	S
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S	E	G	A		A	T	O	M		A	C	E	R	B
E	X	A	M				H	O	E		B	E	R	R

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SAVAGE LOVE

Quickies

Is there a way to
hide my tiny dick?

My little dick has always held me back. I didn't date in high school because I couldn't stand the thought of girls discussing my tiny manhood. That said, I've adapted fairly well and become skilled with my tongue and hands. The biggest problem is that my dick is just small enough that the head pokes straight forward and can be seen through my pants. I never tuck in a shirt because of it. Because I am always in oversize shirts that hang past my waist, I never look professional. I've tried stuffing with socks and it didn't work. Do you know of anything that can mask a pathetic johnson?

PHYSICALLY EMBARRASSING
NUB ISN'T SUFFICIENT

Have you considered packing? Trans men, drag kings, butch dykes, and even straight cis women experimenting with gender expression will sometimes pack—that is, wear “packing dildos” that create the appearance of a masculine bulge. Packers are modeled on soft cocks, and they come in a range of sizes and colors. And so long as you don't engage in false advertising, PENIS—so long as you make it clear to new partners that the bulge in your pants is not a prologue—there's no reason why you couldn't pack, just as there's no reason why you and other guys with small dicks can't strap on a regular dildo when your partner wants a deep dicking.

I'm a mid-20s straight woman, and there's a pattern in my life that I'm trying to break: Since high school, I've repeatedly ended up being friends with wonderful men who I shared an obvious sexual tension with at the start of our “friendships.” Not a single one has ever turned into more than a one-off drunken kiss. I'm starting to think that I'm the problem. An ex of mine (who I met on Bumble) told me that I give off “don't touch me” vibes. Looking back, I can see that all my relationships started in settings where romantic interest was implied—apps, blind dates, etc. I've been spending a lot of time with a classmate of mine. We get along well, and he's hot and single. How do I (for lack of a better term) seduce him?

DREADING THE FRIEND ZONE

Don't seduce, ask. Don't put the moves on someone, use your words—or think of



Dan Savage

your words as your move, DTFZ. Since you give off “don't touch me” vibes (that's some valuable feedback from an ex!), and since we've asked men to do a better job of perceiving and respecting a woman's “don't touch me” vibes, you will have to make your interest unambiguous: “Hey, classmate, we've been spending a lot of time together, and I was wondering if you might be interested in going on a date sometime.”

I am a public-school teacher in the United States. I love teaching, and I want to teach for the rest of my career. I am very good at it, but unfortunately that doesn't affect my pay. After 10 years of poverty, I'm getting tired of going without. I thought perhaps I could do some sex work on the side to help pay off my student loans and get some more money for classroom supplies. Thanks to de facto segregation, all of my students are one specific ethnicity and very poor, so I think I could easily avoid accidentally servicing a parent or relative of a student. But how on earth does someone safely and discreetly embark on sex work as a side hustle?

NEED A SECOND JOB THAT ACTUALLY PAYS

Someone you work with, someone you went to school with, someone who lives in your building—it's not just relatives of your students you need to worry about. Vindictive exes and small-minded, sex-negative busybodies of all stripes can be a problem for sex workers. And since the consequences of being outed as a sex worker are always swift and severe for someone who works with children, you'll want to find another side hustle. You should also get out there and support—we should all get out there and support—Democratic presidential candidates who are calling to forgive or cancel student-loan debt, like Elizabeth Warren and Bernie Sanders. And, yes, it's possible to support more than one candidate at this stage of the political process.

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527
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